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**Keywords:** experience; subject; unconscious; drive; gap

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# The evanescent experience of the gap: reading Bataille with Lacan

Tomás Ramos Mejía<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

My aim with this article is to explore texts written by Georges Bataille on the basis of concepts formulated by the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. I will use the concepts *subject of the unconscious* and *drive* to focus on the texts that make up *La Somme athéologique*. In these texts, although not expressly stating it, Bataille presents an experience of the unconscious as manifested in the drive. This experience is not mystical, but indicative of a particular type of social bond.

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## Introduction

There are important works linking the psychoanalytic theory proposed by Jacques Lacan and the writing of Georges Bataille, usually, the authors are related through the concepts of *Real*, *transgression* and *jouissance*.<sup>2</sup> Those readings in different ways propose a relative continuity between Freud's death drive, the impulse towards excess through transgression of individual limits, and of language pro-

posed by Bataille and Lacan's *jouissance* as the destructive Real that is in the body but outside the symbolic order. In this framework, there are those who propose the confluence between these concepts<sup>3</sup>, in some cases explicitly associating them with animality and nature.<sup>4</sup> Others suggest a direct influence of Bataille on Lacan and<sup>5</sup>, finally, some argue that Bataille's thought represents a radicalisation of Lacanian psychoanalysis: while Bataille affirms that there is an impulse towards the experience of dislocation

<sup>1</sup> University of Salamanca.

<sup>2</sup> Eugénie Lemoine-Luccioni, "La transgression chez Georges Bataille et l'interdique analytique," in *Écrits d'ailleurs. Georges Bataille et les ethnologues* (Paris: Ed. de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1987); Fred Botting, "Relations of the Real in Lacan, Bataille and Blanchot," *Sub-Stance*, no. 73 (1994), 23, no.1 24–40; Silvia Lippi, "Transgression et violence chez Bataille et Lacan," *La clinique lacanienne*, 2, no. 10 (2005): 245–262; Benjamin Noys, "Shattering the subject: Georges Bataille and the limits of therapy," *European Journal of Psychotherapy & Counselling* 7, no. 3 (2006): 125–136; Andrew Ryder, "Inner experience is not psychosis: Bataille's ethics and Lacanian subjectivity," *Parrhesia*, no. 9 (2010): 94–108; and Tim Themi, "Bataille and the erotics of the real," *Parrhesia*, no. 24 (2015): 312–335.

<sup>3</sup> See Lemoine-Luccioni, "La transgression chez Georges Bataille et l'interdique analytique," 68–72; Lippi, "Transgression et violence chez Bataille et Lacan," 252–261; and Andrew Ryder, "Inner experience is not psychosis: Bataille's ethics and Lacanian subjectivity," 103.

<sup>4</sup> See Themi, "Bataille and the erotics of the real," 312–313 and 319–320.

<sup>5</sup> See Botting, "Relations of the Real in Lacan, Bataille and Blanchot," 24–27; and Noys, "Shattering the subject: Georges Bataille and the limits of therapy," 131–134. See also Elisabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997): 217.

of the subject, Lacan would attempt to sustain it either as owner of corporal jouissance<sup>6</sup> or as language user.<sup>7</sup>

My proposal is different. I will first take Lacan not as a creative or critical appropriation, but as a subversion of Freud's work. Thus, I consider theirs to be, by definition, two immeasurable paradigms. I understand Lacan's *retour* to Freud<sup>8</sup> in this sense. I will rely, in part, on the reading of the psychoanalyst and researcher Alfredo Eidelsztein,<sup>9</sup> who postulates that the theoretical model proposed by Lacan opposes that of contemporary psychoanalysis and its hegemonic discourse, including that of Lacan's own intellectual heirs, especially Jacques Alain Miller, who, as a result of a theoretical deviation, assimilated it to Freud's substantialist notions.

According to this interpretation, while Freud took a naturalistic and inductive position, Lacan used the hypothetical-deductive method and took modern linguistics, mathematics and physics as models. Psychoanalysis, for Lacan, could not be an observational or empirical science. Instead, it had to operate as a conjectural science, relying exclusively on the symbolic field, with its intrinsic and constitutive limits.<sup>10</sup> This led him to radically reformulate the former's concepts. This reformulation revolved around the primacy of language un-

derstood as the determining factor of human experience. Central concepts such as *unconscious*, *subject* and *drive* ceased to be associated with forces originating in the living substance and became derivations of the logic of the signifier.

Secondly, I will use Lacanian psychoanalytic theory to analyse Bataille's texts in a literary reading register. I will posit the idea that Bataille's writing expresses the experience of the drive as one of the possible locations of the subject of the unconscious. I will consider the extent to which *La Somme Athéologique* thematizes phenomena that Lacan took as indications of the drive. Thus, the *inner experience* proposed by Bataille is not some mystical experience of an ineffable interiority, but a symbolically determined experience of a social bond.

## The subject of unconscious, the gap

Lacan's theory begins with his claim that "There's no such thing as a prediscursive reality. Every reality is founded and defined by a discourse."<sup>11</sup> This means that human reality is that which is created by language, defined by its specific structure, that of the differential

<sup>6</sup> See Noys, "Shattering the subject: Georges Bataille and the limits of therapy," 131-134.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Ryder, "Inner experience is not psychosis: Bataille's ethics and Lacanian subjectivity," 99.

<sup>8</sup> Announced by Lacan in 1955, with the "return to Freud" Lacan referred to the need to return to Freud's texts in order to reformulate the main concepts of psychoanalysis. See Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (USA: Norton & Company, 2006), 334-365.

<sup>9</sup> Alfredo Eidelsztein was the founder of ApoLa, a psychoanalytic society with offices in several countries in America and Europe that had a distinct scientific research program (<https://apola.online/index>). Eidelsztein studied psychoanalytic theories and gave seminars across Latin America and Europe. Some of his numerous publications are translated into English, e.g., *The Graph of Desire*, trans. Florencia F.C. Shanahan (London: Karnac, 2009), Italian and Portuguese. He is currently working as a psychoanalyst in the city of Buenos Aires and regularly presents advances in his research at APOLA's central seminar.

<sup>10</sup> Eidelsztein's position on the relationship between psychoanalysis and science can be found in Alfredo Eidelsztein, "El origen del sujeto en psicoanálisis. Del Big Bang del lenguaje y el discurso en la causación del sujeto [Subject causation in psychoanalysis: language and Big Bang discourse on the subject causation]," in *El Rey está desnudo: Revista para el psicoanálisis por venir*, no. 5 (2012): 7-64. See also Alfredo Eidelsztein, *Otro Lacan* (Buenos Aires: Letra viva, 2017), 91-138.

<sup>11</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX*, trans. Bruce Fink (USA, Norton & Company, 1999), 32.

relation of its elements, the signifiers.<sup>12</sup> When Lacan stated in 1956, “that every real signifier is, as such, a signifier that signifies nothing”<sup>13</sup>, he meant to say that a signifier does not have an autonomous referent beyond its differential relation to other signifiers. Language, according to Lacan, is thus a system of differential relations in which each signifier receives its value through their (structured) difference from other signifiers. What structures human experience is not our immediate perception of the external world, or our experience of biological forces, but the articulation between signifiers.

In Seminar XI Lacan claimed that the “interval intersecting the signifiers (...) forms part of the very structure of the signifier”<sup>14</sup> and in his *Écrits*: “The repeating interval” is “the most radical structure of the signifying chain.”<sup>15</sup> Also in his *Écrits* he asserts, “The cut in the signifying chain (...) it is the most radical element in the discontinuous sequence of the chain”<sup>16</sup> and, again, in Seminar XI: “everything emerges from the structure of the signifier. This structure is based on what I first called the function of the cut.”<sup>17</sup> The cut forms

an interval, which is the very structure of the signifier. Lacan associates this structure to a gap (*béance*): “the cut (...) is now articulated, in the development of my discourse, as the topological function of the rim. The relation of the subject to the Other is entirely produced in a process of gap”<sup>18</sup> which is “defined by a rim-like structure.”<sup>19</sup> The differential relation between signifiers contains intervals, holes to which Lacan gives a structural character because it is the place of distinction and articulation between them.

The gap, this essential term in Lacan’s conceptual architecture, is intimately related to the concept of *subject of the unconscious*. Further, in Seminar XI he stated, “when speaking of this gap one is dealing with an ontological function, by which I thought I had to introduce, it being the most essential, the function of the unconscious.”<sup>20</sup> Therefore, if “the unconscious is language”<sup>21</sup>, it is not surprising that this gap has a structural function in the unconscious. In this context, the *subject of the unconscious* is not the individual, not even repressed biological forces and representations that exceed the human will. Instead, it is the localisation in

<sup>12</sup> This idea and, in relation to it, the way in which Lacan read Saussure has often been criticised both from linguistics and from psychoanalysis. Lacan is accused of misreading and distorting Saussure’s concepts since “There is nothing (...) in Saussure’s theories to oblige us to subscribe to the idea that reality is differentiated only through the medium of language” (Raymond C. Tallis. *Not Saussure: a critique of post-Saussurean literary theory*. Hampshire: Macmillan, 1988, 58). See also Georges Mounin. In *Introduction à la sémiologie*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1970, 181–187; Roy Harris. *Saussure and his interpreters*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003, 115–120. Some psychoanalysts claim that Lacan, under the influence of linguistics, leaved aside extra-linguistic components such as drive economy and affects. See Alain Costes. *Lacan: Le fourvoisement linguistique*. Paris: P.U.F, 2003; André Green. “Langue, parole psychanalytique et absence”. In *Revue Française de Psychanalyse*, no. 5 (2007): 1461–1471.

<sup>13</sup> Jacques Lacan. *Book III. The Psychoses. 1955–1956*, trans. Russell Crigg (London and New York: Norton, 1997), 185.

<sup>14</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI*, trans. Alain Sheridan (USA: Norton & Company, 1998), 214.

<sup>15</sup> Jacques Lacan. *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink. (USA: Norton & Company, 2006), 715.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 558.

<sup>17</sup> Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI*, 206.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>21</sup> Lacan, *Écrits*, 736.

the gap of the discourse: “the subject manifests himself in his gap”<sup>22</sup> and further on: “That effect – the subject – is the intermediary effect between what characterizes a signifier and another signifier, namely, the fact that each of them (...) is an element.”<sup>23</sup> The *subject of the unconscious* is the lack of being [*manqué-à- être*] as an effect of the logic of the signifier.<sup>24</sup>

I will now introduce the phenomenology of the unconscious, the question of the ways in which the experience of the gap manifests itself. Lacan is referring to a paradoxical entity, one that is

neither being, nor non-being, but the unrealized (...) What is ontic in the function of the unconscious is the split through which that something (...) is for a moment brought into the light of day— a moment because the second stage, which is one of closing up, gives this apprehension a vanishing aspect.<sup>25</sup>

To Lacan the unconscious has an evanescent presence. The subject of the unconscious presents itself fleetingly – through an interpretative act, or *lapsus* – in the form of surprise, anguish, or laughter. The simultaneous opening and closing of the unconscious could be produced in the diachrony of a psychoanalytic session, but it can also appear in the history of psychoanalysis<sup>26</sup> or, I add, the history of ideas in general. Would it be possible to find indica-

tions of a certain opening of the unconscious in some texts, such as those of Bataille?

## The concept of drive and the imaginary deceit

I will now turn to the concept of drive. For Lacan, the drive is the incidence of the signifying chain of the unconscious in the “real”, biological body. It is the representation of the gaps of the signifying articulation in the gaps of the “real” body. More precisely, it is the localisation of the subject of the unconscious, the lack in being [*manqué-à-être*], in the holes offered by the body, according to the logic of grammar, which is part of the symbolic. In this regard, in the “The subversion of the subject and the dialectic of desire”, Lacan asserted that in the concept of drive

the subject is designated on the basis of a pinpointing that is organic, oral, anal, and so on (...). The drive is what becomes of demand when the subject vanishes from it. (...) Demand also disappears, except that the cut remains, for the latter remains present in what distinguishes the drive from the organic function it inhabits: namely, its grammatical artifice, so manifest in the reversals of its articulation with respect to both source and object.<sup>27</sup>

On one hand, to explain the movement of

<sup>22</sup> Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX*, 16.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>24</sup> As Bruce Fink rightly points out, the Lacanian subject “it is *not* some kind of underlying substance or substratum” and has “*no other being than as a breach in discourse*” (Bruce Fink. *The Lacanian Subject*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997, 41). However, although he asserts that the subject is not the individual, he also tends to equate them. This can be seen, firstly, in his understanding of psychoanalytic therapy: “I here appears as the subject that analysis aims to bring forth: an I that assumes responsibility for the unconscious.” (*Ibid.* 46). For Fink, the subject as individual must assume, accept responsibility for his or her unconscious as if it were something internal to him. Second, he describes drives and *jouissance* as bodily experiences that are then mediated by language. He claims that “signifiers are what allow drives to be represented: presented to us as beings of language” (*Ibid.*, 74) and also that “certain *jouissance* that is ‘squeezed’ out of the body is refound in speech” (*Ibid.*, 99).

<sup>25</sup> Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI*, 31–31.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Eidelsztein, *Otro Lacan*, 203.

<sup>27</sup> Lacan, *Ecrits*, 692.



the logical hole into the real, phenomenological hole, he turned to the idea of a “topological community”<sup>28</sup> between one and the other. The topological community refers to the fact that both the signifying chain and the empirical body have gaps. While it is a suggestive idea, it is somewhat obscure. In this respect, Lacan said that the delimitation of the erogenous zone produced by the drive “is the result that takes advantage of the anatomical characteristic of a margin or border: the lips, ‘the enclosure of the teeth,’ the rim of the anus, the penile groove, the vagina, and the slit formed by the eyelids, not to mention the hollow of the ear.”<sup>29</sup>

On the other hand, discourse is reduced to the grammatical artifices that articulate the (grammatical) subject, verb and object. In this framework, Lacan stated that there are four drives which he presents at Seminar XI: oral – to suck/to be sucked – , anal – give/receive – , scopophilic – look/be looked at – and invocatory – hear/be heard. It’s clear here that grammatical artifices are related to the tasks of caring for the first representatives of the Other from birth.

Another important aspect of the drive that must be emphasized is the deceit that it involves. As Lacan claimed, criticising the English psychoanalysts, “they do not imagine the drives are the echo in the body of a fact of saying.”<sup>30</sup> For Lacan, the imaginary produces an illusion of consistency and the concealment of symbolic determinations.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, drives are not an energy that comes from the biological body; they are, for Lacan, discursive facts.

## Bataille’s experience of the unconscious

Although Bataille rejected the figure of the philosopher he can be considered a “philosopher of becoming”. According to Nidesh Lawtoo, Bataille was influenced by Nietzsche to develop an *ontology of becoming* which defines being not as an immutable substance, but as a movement of “dynamic transgression of limits”.<sup>32</sup> This produces in the subject (individual) the paradoxical experience of his outside, which is why Bataille asserts: “excess is no other than that whereby the being is firstly (...) Being is also, doubtless, to be found at the limits [*l’être sans doute se trouve aussi dans des limites*].”<sup>33</sup> Being is for Bataille an excessive movement that is both inside and outside the individual subject, who is traversed by that movement in which he loses himself.

Throughout his intellectual trajectory, Bataille developed this ontology of becoming in which the holes of the body have a relevant place. As Lawtoo rightly points out “the interrogation of the limits of the subject starts from an interrogation of what we could call the ‘doors’ of the body: the mouth, the vagina, the anus and the eyes (...) Through these openings, the subject is traversed by different flows and its integrity, totality and stability are challenged.”<sup>34</sup> Benjamin Noys expresses himself in the same vein when he explains that *transgression* in Bataille traces those bodily openings and, at the same time, opens the language, as an experience of “rupture” that defines a space of connection between bodies. He is right to claim that Lacan also addressed these openings

<sup>28</sup> Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI*, 57–58.

<sup>29</sup> Lacan, *Ecrits*, 692.

<sup>30</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Sinthome: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XXIII*, trans. A.R, Pirce (Cambridge UK: Polity, 2016), 4 (2005),

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Eidelsztein, *Otro Lacan*, 1–8.

<sup>32</sup> Nidesh Lawtoo, “Bataille and the suspension of Being,” *Lingua Romana*, 4 (2005): unpaginated.

<sup>33</sup> Georges Bataille, *Madame Edwarda* in Fred Botting and Scott Wilson. *Bataille* (Nueva York: Palgrave, 2001), 236. Modified translation.

<sup>34</sup> Lawtoo, “Bataille and the suspension of Being,” unpaginated.

of the body<sup>35</sup>, although he cared less about the edges than about the holes – and this is no small matter.

Yet, this is a general description that I will now analyse in light of the two aforementioned paradigms. In my view, thinking in terms of transgressing both the body and language boundaries is problematic because it encourages us to think in terms of inside/outside, or inclusion/exclusion. For Lacan, the body and language have no traversable limits in the sense that there is no line that can be crossed. This is, again, an imaginary effect. The body has zones of “extimacy [*extimité*]”<sup>36</sup> just as the language has a structural failure, the gap, without which no language is possible. Both are places of external interiority.

It is also Bataille’s own problem. For example, speaking about the inner experience, he claimed: “this secret is only the inner presence, silent, unfathomable and naked”<sup>37</sup> and, at the same time, “what counts is no longer the statement of wind, but the wind.”<sup>38</sup> He also argued, “Although words drain almost all life from within us (...) there subsists in us a silent, elusive, ungraspable part. In the region of words, of discourse, this part is neglected (...) they are the vague inner movements, which depend on no object and have no intent.”<sup>39</sup> On the one hand, he described an unfathomable interior, comparable to the Freudian drive or unconscious and, on the other, he used the wind as a reference to a phenomenon external to the individual who names it. In addition, the

words are imposed to the silent corporal forces, which nevertheless remain pushing from the inside. Thus, Bataille presented a classic Freudian scheme where he was at times subject to the most elementary imaginary illusion in believing that symbolically determined phenomena, such as the drive, originates in the biological body.

Nevertheless, Bataille mainly took up phenomena associated with holes and the permeability of the body, and emotions related to experience of the unconscious. The anus and the mouth are the two body holes and the laughter, the anguish and the surprise the emotions mentioned. The early references of Bataille to the excremental hole are very well known. It is inevitable to mention the fantasy of the solar anus and the *Heterology*, already addressed in Julia Kristeva’s famous work, among others.<sup>40</sup> In *La valeur d’usage de D.A.F. de Sade*, Bataille argued that human existence is governed by impulses of appropriation, related to oral incorporation, and exclusion, related to the evacuation of excreta. In fact, although he does not only refer to the expulsion of excrement, he calls the latter also “excrementitious impulses [*impulsions excrementiells*].”<sup>41</sup> The set of objects reached by the excretion impulse – faeces, menstrual blood, corpses – make up the domain of the heterogeneous. The characteristic feature of these objects is that they cannot be assimilated by common sense, science and philosophy, governed by the principles of identity and of homeostatic balance.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Benjamin Noys, “Shattering the subject: Georges Bataille and the limits of therapy,” 126.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, vol. VII*, trans. Dennis Porter (UK: Routledge, 1992), 139.

<sup>37</sup> Georges Bataille, *Inner Experience*, trans. Anne Boldt (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988), 16.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 13

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>40</sup> See Georges Bataille, *Œuvres complètes. Tome II* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), 14, 54–72. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror. An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roduiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), and Marina Galetti, “Definition of Heterology,” *Theory, Culture & Society*, 35, no. 4–5 (2017): 29–40, DOI: 10.1177/0263276418790349.

<sup>41</sup> Bataille, *Œuvres complètes. Tome II*, 58.

That is why he presented *Heterology* as the paradoxical “science of the completely other [tout autre]”<sup>42</sup> which is not a simple exteriority but a paradoxical internal exteriority that puts the individual subject in ecstasy, outside itself. But leaving aside this intention to elaborate a systematic theory, it is precisely that experience that Bataille attempted to describe in the *Atheological Summa*. In these texts, that have the form of a personal diary, Bataille embarked on the impossible task of writing about an experience that exceeds language and, with that, the limits of the individual. In what follows, I will move from a theoretical to a literary reading register.

For Bataille, through “the contestation of knowledge”<sup>43</sup>, he gained access to “nonsense” from which emerged the experience of an “inconceivable unknown [l’inconnu inconcevable]” that implied the “obscure apprehension of the unknown: of a presence which is no longer in any way distinct from an absence.”<sup>44</sup> The critique of knowledge was a critique of Hegel and the possibility of the realisation of absolute knowledge. The non-knowledge [non-savoir], the being that is beyond knowledge, is a “painful tooth in Hegel’s mouth. Would a sick tooth alone be missing from the great philosopher?”<sup>45</sup> The rotten tooth expresses the non-sense in the place from where reason vociferates, from the philosopher’s mouth.

The experience of the nonsense is linked frequently with the holes of the body. By considering an inner experience as an experience of a gap, I approach Lacan’s conceptualisation. A hole is not a force that emerges from the interi-

ority of the body, but a space of continuity between the body and its outside. It is a privileged space for the unfolding of an experience of becoming, and for the localisation of the subject of the unconscious. In *On Nietzsche* Bataille referred to the holes of the body, but did not specify which ones. When talking about the relationship between two particular subjects, “in the realm of sensuality” he said, “What attracts isn’t immediate being, but a wound. A break in the body’s integrity, the orifice [orifice] of filth.”<sup>46</sup> I might assume that Bataille was thinking of the corporal holes, which he also called “nothingness.”<sup>47</sup> Therefore, Bataille gave great importance to the corporal holes as entities, the perception of which produces not only desire, but also anguish.

Above all, a great deal of value is placed on phenomena involving the mouth, among which laughter stands out. The link between mouth and laughter appears with particular clarity in *Inner Experience*, where he claimed, “I don’t write for the one who would be unable to browse, but for the one who, entering into this book, would fall as into a hole.”<sup>48</sup> He argued that “flashes and the rebounding of laughter follow the first opening [ouverture], the permeability of a dawning smile.”<sup>49</sup> Laughter, inseparable from the opening of the mouth, procures a “contagion whose effect is that of a wave which rebounds, for those who laugh, together become like the waves of the sea – there no longer exists between them any partition as long as the laughter lasts.”<sup>50</sup> In *Guilty*, he claimed that the being is “what goes from one to another when we laugh.”<sup>51</sup> Thus, the *béance*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>43</sup> Bataille, *Inner Experience*, 12.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 4–5.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>46</sup> Georges Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, trans. Bruce Boone (London : Continuum, 2004), 22.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 20

<sup>48</sup> Bataille, *Inner Experience*, 181.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>51</sup> Georges Bataille, *Guilty*, trans. Bruce Boone (USA: The Lapis Press, 188), 45



appears here in both senses: as open-mouthed and as a gap, not between the signifiers, but between the individuals pierced by laughter. That which slips from one to the other could well be interpreted as the perception of the metonymic sliding and the insistence of the lack of being. Maybe this was what Lacan wanted to say with the claim that “analytic interpretation is not meant [*faite*] to be understood; it is meant to produce waves.”<sup>52</sup>

## Conclusion

If Lacan and Bataille agree on anything, it is on their attention to the corporal holes. But while the former locates in them the subject of the unconscious as an effect of symbolic logic, the latter, without this resource, understands it as a cosmic openness. Therefore, Noys is not entirely correct when he states that Lacanian psychoanalysis recovers the (modern) subject, while Bataille, by identifying it with a “rest” and adding “fluidity” or a “sticky” aspect, puts it in “free fall.”<sup>53</sup> First, because he is transposing the modern subject into the Lacanian one, which constitutes a theoretical imprecision.<sup>54</sup> For Lacan there is no primacy of the subject, but of the signifier, the Other of which the subject is the effect. And that subject is never the *person*. In a way, it is a residue, except that it is not a sticky flux, but the gap as interval between signifiers. Second, by using the language of the fluids, he brings Bataille closer to the conception of the drive as a substantial entity near to Freudian conception. The relative connection between both is then concealed.

I think that Bataille perceived one of the fundamental traits of the Lacanian subject: the

value attached to the concept of gap. That is why the best Bataille is the one who, detached from the lexicon of flows, emphasises the spaces, the *topos* that are inside and outside the *parlêtre*. In this way, it can be said that Bataille’s texts show the way in which the logic of the signifier presents itself in the body, favouring its real holes, but also making it believe that it speaks for itself, instead of being spoken by the Other.

Bataille’s texts would be the manifestation, the presentation of the unconscious. Bataille’s experience is not, as Lemoine-Luccioni pointed out<sup>55</sup>, the experience of the first significant understood as a unary trait, nor that of the second, but of the interval between them. In this sense, Bataille certainly shows resistance to the Lacanian concepts, as Noys claims.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, I interpret this resistance in another way. Not as a strength, but as a symptom of the imaginary illusion concealing the signifier’s determination of inner experience. Thus, his writing experience captures the conceptual power of the hole and, at the same time, sometimes repeats the metaphor of an inside/outside topology.

Considering that the unconscious is the discourse of the Other, which is, in turn, synonymous with social link<sup>57</sup>, I can affirm that Bataille’s inner experience as that of the drive as the localisation in the body of the social bond.

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<sup>52</sup> Jacques Lacan. “Conferences and Conversations in North American Universities.” *Scilicet*, no. 6/7 (1975): 32–37.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Noys, “Shattering the subject: Georges Bataille and the limits of therapy,” 94, 130–133.

<sup>54</sup> Ryder states something similar. Cf. Andrew Ryder, “Inner Experience is Not Psychosis: Bataille’s Ethics and Lacanian Subjectivity,” 99.

<sup>55</sup> See, Eugénie Lemoine-Luccioni, “La transgression chez Georges Bataille et l’interdiction analytique,” 68.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Noys, “Shattering the subject: Georges Bataille and the limits of therapy,” 133.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX*, 50.

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